Garden City Urban Renewal Agency
River Front District

Final Report
FY1996 – FY2014
The Garden City Urban Renewal Agency was formed in 1995 by the Garden City Council as a means to revitalize blighted and deteriorating areas in the older part of the city. The first project area for the Agency was the River Front District.

BACKGROUND

In June 1995, the Garden City Council approved the organization of an urban renewal agency under the Idaho Urban Renewal Act. Then Mayor Ted Ellis appointed volunteer commissioners to the Agency and those commissioners were approved by the City Council.

In September of 1995, the Council identified a section of the city as deteriorating and eligible for urban renewal activities. This area is generally described as between Veterans Parkway on the east, Remington Street on the west, Osage on the south and the Boise River on the north and was titled, “The River Front Project Area”.

The Urban Renewal Agency then developed a Project Plan pursuant to the State of Idaho Urban Renewal Law, Chapter 20, Title 50. After a public hearing in the summer of 1996, the Agency forwarded the Plan to the Planning & Zoning Commission and to the City Council for final approval. Planning & Zoning found the Plan to be in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and the City Council, after another public hearing, approved the Plan in December 1996 with technical changes approved in January 1997. The Plan was amended and restated in April 2008 to add several small adjacent parcels that were also eligible for redevelopment.

The Plan outlined the potential activities necessary for revitalization of the area, including but not limited to: park and greenbelt development; public infrastructure improvements, such as streets, sewer and water lines; and other public facilities (water systems, drainage improvements, etc.).
addition, provisions were included for senior and youth facilities and activities and public safety enhancements.

The Project Plan anticipated revitalization funding for projects to come from tax increment revenue and long-term debt financing, if necessary and as provided by law. The project plan was for 30 years. The “base” value of the River Front area was $25,080,412 in 1996 when the City Council approved the final plan for the district. The City lent the Agency $58,000 plus city staff assistance for start-up costs, all of which was repaid by 2000.

The Agency received its first tax increment revenue in 1997, a total of $22,902. Over the course of the next 16 years until the District was closed out early in FY2013, the Agency received and invested nearly $8.0 million in the project area. Final projects were completed in FY2014. The Agency adopted a "Pay As You Go" philosophy and no long-term debt or financing was undertaken.

Despite the Great Recession taking place throughout a portion of the project years, the incremental growth in the district by the end of 2013 was $41,912,006 (Ada County Assessor), nearly twice the growth rate of Garden City as a whole. That incremental value is now a part of the city’s taxable value, lowering property value mil levy rates throughout the city. The total assessed value of the area at the closing of the project was $66,992,418, a 167% increase over its 1996 value.

The first priority of the Agency was to replace deteriorating infrastructure so redevelopment and revitalization could take place.
Without improvements to basic infrastructure, economic and redevelopment activities were severely restricted. During the course of the Plan, the Agency completed over $5.2 million (66.5% of total funding) in basic infrastructure and public facility improvement projects, including the following:

**WATER AND SEWER**

Water and sewer lines and facilities are critical to the safety and livability of an area. Those within the River Front project area were in many instances, crumbling and in disrepair. Water and sewer line disruptions were requiring significant maintenance and sunk cost by the city's Public Works Department and putting an undue financial burden on ratepayers throughout the city in general and in the project area, in particular.

*Water Line Improvements*

Full Water lines replacements were funded on 42nd and 43rd streets; on Bills, Teena and Ray streets; on sections of Adams Street between 43rd and 48th streets; and on 46th Street in conjunction with the building of the 46th Street water reservoir (see below).

In addition, the Agency partnered with the City to replace the waterline under the Boise River from Remington St. to the Plantation subdivision when the original line collapsed. The project also included a new water line on Remington St. from the river to Alworth St.

*Sewer Line Improvements*

New sewer lines were funded on 42nd Street from Chinden to Adams; on 46th Street from the new reservoir to the Boise River; on Bills, Teena and Ray streets; and on 44th and 45th streets from Adams to the Boise River.

*Well and Pump House*

A new well was drilled and a new state-of-the-art pump house was developed by the Agency on 43rd Street in partnership with the City. This well is now capable of producing enough water for the entire city, if necessary, during the winter months. Prior to the development of this new well, there was barely enough well capacity to fulfill fire flow needs in this part of the city.

New 43rd Street Well and Pump House
New Water Meters

Virtually every water meter on the River Front project area was replaced, resulting in more accurate accounting of water and wastewater usage.

Reservoir and Booster Pump Station

The Agency funded a 750,000-gallon reservoir and booster pump station on city-owned property on 46th Street. At the time this project was built, the City did not have a reservoir or any means to store water in case of an emergency situation. This reservoir now provides for that capacity and, in addition, allows the Public Works Department to have a more efficient operation of city wells and pumps. At a cost of $2,000,000, this was the largest project funded by the Agency.

This project is of vital importance to the city for future economic development and redevelopment in the older part of the city as well as for protective purposes should there be major flooding or fires anywhere in the city.
Street Improvements

The older part of the city lacks significant street and streetscape improvements. In partnership with the Ada County Highway District, the Agency was able to leverage its investment dollars in curbs, gutters, sidewalks and new streets.

Major street improvements were completed on 42\textsuperscript{nd} St. from Chinden to the Boise River as well as 48\textsuperscript{th}, 49\textsuperscript{th}, 50\textsuperscript{th} and 51\textsuperscript{st} streets from Alworth to the Boise River. In addition, the Agency funded colored, stamped concrete between curbs and gutters during the Adams Street roadway improvements from Veterans Parkway to Remington Street.

Street Lights

The Agency funded new streetlights on 42\textsuperscript{nd}, 43\textsuperscript{rd} and 48\textsuperscript{th} streets to improve neighborhood safety. Additional street lights were added at every intersection and one mid-way through each block from Veterans Parkway to Remington Street to increase lighting in higher crime areas.

Other Infrastructure/Streetscape Improvements

Two affordable housing projects, Mallard Apartments and Mystic Cove subdivision, were developed early in the Project’s history and the Agency participated by reimbursing certain infrastructure improvements, e.g. water lines, streetlights and fencing.

The Agency partnered with ACHD to provide an enhanced pedestrian crossing at the intersection of 42\textsuperscript{nd} and Adams St. This is a heavy traffic area and is used extensively by children going to the Boys & Girls Club and Anser Charter School. It required additional lighting and signing to make it safer for the youth population.
Recreational and green space opportunities are critical for the livability and revitalization of a city and the Agency focused efforts on those as well.

**Greenbelt Extension**

The Greenbelt is one of the most valuable amenities in the Treasure Valley. When the Agency was formed, there was a gap in the paved pathway from 44th to 52nd Streets. While the city owned or had easements along most of the distance, traditional city budget funding was never available to procure remaining easements and pave the path. As one of its first major projects, the Agency undertook the funding and completion of the final 1.3 miles of greenbelt pathway along the south side of the Boise River. The Land Group of Eagle, ID designed and managed the construction of this pathway as well as the Mystic Cove and Riverfront Parks noted below.

While some easements were purchased, several property owners along the pathway generously donated easements so the path could be completed. The completed path was donated by the Agency to the city.

New Greenbelt Pathway
New City Parks

When the Plan was approved in 1996, there was only one very small city park located in the project area, a major disadvantage to current residents and to hopes for revitalizing the area. One goal of the Plan was to create more open space to enhance the livability of the area and this was accomplished by the addition of two new city parks.

Mystic Cove Park

Mystic Cove Park was completed in conjunction with the extension of the greenbelt pathway from 44th to 52nd streets. Located adjacent to the greenbelt at the end of 48th Street by the Boise River, Mystic Cove Park serves not only nearby residents but also those enjoying the greenbelt. Playground equipment and park benches are readily available for all to enjoy.

Riverfront Park by the Boys & Girls Club

The Boys & Girls Club of Ada County is located at the north end of 42nd Street by the Boise River. Since the inception of this Club in 1997, the juvenile crime rate in the city has decreased by nearly 30% and children in Garden City, many of them latchkey kids, now have a safe and positive place to go after school and during the summer months.

One of the missing links for both the Club and for the families living close by was open space where kids could play and families could gather for picnics or to simply have an accessible and affordable place to recreate.
The City owned a very small (less than 1/2 acre) park next to the Club. The existing playground equipment was old and needed to be replaced and other amenities were not available.

The Agency purchased property adjacent to that small park. And by combining both parcels was able to develop the Riverfront Park. Although not on the scale of major parks in neighboring Boise, the Riverfront Park is now the largest and only fully developed park in Garden City. New playground equipment, restrooms, a small picnic pavilion as well as other tables and benches are all included. For other recreation, there is a basketball court with bleachers, a large grassy play area and a walking path around the perimeter of the park. This fully landscaped park was deeded to the City by the Agency upon its completion.

![Riverfront Park](image)

The location of this park was one of the primary reasons the developers of a new 64-unit affordable apartment complex chose its site on 42nd Street (now part of the River Front East project area). This $10,000,000 project will provide significant new and upgraded affordable housing opportunities in the city.

The park is also within a block of, and heavily used by, the Anser Charter School, one of the largest and continuously operating charter schools in the state.
Other Projects

The Agency also funded a number of other smaller projects, specifically for public safety improvements and Senior and Youth Programs.

Public Safety Programs

The Garden City Police Public Safety building is located in the district and received Agency funding over the years for numerous projects, including upgraded heating and air conditioning systems with increased insulation to control costs; upgraded computers and servers to improve record retention; new holding and interview rooms to meet federal standards; and, a vehicle for the department resource officer formerly assigned to the Boys & Girls Club.

Animal Shelter Improvements

The city does not shelter dogs for adoption; however, it does hold runaway dogs for owner pick-up or as a shelter until they can be taken to the Idaho Humane Society. The existing structure was lacking safe kennels, outdoor runs or adequate electrical, heating and air conditioning systems. The Agency worked with the Police Department and Code Enforcement to upgrade the facility for better and more humane protection of the animals.

Garden City Library

Nearly 30% of residents in the District hold Garden City library cards and these residents often have no access to books or the Internet other than at the library. The Agency has partnered with the library on numerous projects, including the addition of new computers and a “Kindergarten Readiness” program in the District.

Boys & Girls Club

As noted above, the Boys & Girls Club is an important member of the community and the Agency has worked closely with Club officials to improve the experience children have at the Club. Included in these projects has been funding for energy efficient thermostats, security cameras, and a new audio and video system for the gymnasium.

Senior Center

The Agency assisted in the purchase of new kitchen equipment for the Senior Center when it underwent a renovation under a Community Development Block Grant.

Community Events

The Agency initiated the city's annual “Spring Sweep” event and coordinated volunteer teams for a number of years to assist seniors and others to spring clean their properties. In addition, the Agency has supported numerous community events, such as the Garden City Police Officers Association/Soroptimist of Garden City's annual Christmas party for Garden City children.
Financial Overview

As noted earlier, the Agency invested nearly $8.0 million in the River Front District over the course of 16 years. Those dollars were received and allocated as follows:

**REVENUE AND EXPENSE FOR RIVER FRONT PROJECT AREA**  
**FY1996 – FY2014**

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<tr>
<th>REVENUE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>% TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax Increment Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td>Start-Up Loan Proceeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misc. Income</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSE</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Administrative/Legal/Audit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks/Greenbelts</td>
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<td>Public Facilities</td>
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<td>Seniors, Youth, Community</td>
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<td>Start-Up Costs(^1)</td>
<td>87343</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribution to Tax Entities(^2)</td>
<td>1247</td>
<td>.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7908619</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
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\(^1\) Start-Up Costs included a $58,000 loan from the City plus $29,343 in administrative costs, all of which were repaid to the City.  
\(^2\) Per Idaho law, any funds left at the termination of the District were rebated to the taxing entities  
Note: Unaudited numbers. Annual audits may be requested from the Agency.
Summary

The above projects could not have been completed without the ability of the Agency to utilize tax increment dollars. Without these projects, the incremental value of the area would not be what it is today. New development, including the first stick-built homes in 30 to 40 years is now being built in the District and new affordable housing (Mallard Pointe and Mystic Cove) is in place. New large-scale projects, such as Trailwinds Apartments by Riverfront Park, are becoming a reality because the development community is recognizing revitalization efforts in the area.

While water and sewer improvements have had a direct impact on water quality and fire flows in the urban renewal district, many of these projects have also benefited residents throughout the city, as new facilities have relieved the financial burden of capital improvements for all ratepayers. Projects such as the new well/pump house on 43rd Street and the water reservoir/booster pump station on 46th Street will benefit all residents of the city for many years to come.

Further, residents throughout the city can now enjoy the benefits of a new greenbelt pathway and two new city parks. These basic amenities are critical to revitalization efforts for future growth and economic development in the community.

March 2015

Garden City Urban Renewal Agency

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